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PORTRAIT OF YOUNG GIRL

Gift of Manton B. Metcalf, 1921

by Cornelis de Vos

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THE MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

THE Memorial Exhibition in the special galleries from December 12, 1923, to January 9, 1924, brought together for the first time the many gifts which have been made to the Museum by the late Manton B. Metcalf, and the result was an impressive surprise. It is true that visitors for years have been noticing important additions to the permanent collections which bore his name, but few realized the uniformly high quality of the gifts or the wide interests of the collector. Few realized too the length of time required to select these objects or how closely he kept in touch with the Museum during their acquisition.

Mr. Metcalf found delight in many fields, in painting, both European and Chinese, in sculpture, glass and pottery. The vigorous "Hagar and Ishmael" of Francisco Collantes, in which the chief feature is a strong landscape rich in color and tone, and the "Portrait of a Young Lady" by Carreno di Miranda are characteristic and beautiful examples of the Spanish School. From Flanders comes the "Portrait of a Young Princess" by Cornelis de Vos, and the "Adoration of the Magi" which is attributed to Henri Met de Bles, which are elsewhere described in this Bulletin. In both there are the love of color, drawing and portraiture which are the features of Flemish painting. The Italian examples include the birth-plate from the Bardini collection, which is Florentine of the 15th century. One appreciates this opportunity to be brought so intimately into an Italian home of that period. There is also a predella panel showing "St. John the Baptist being conducted to Martyrdom," which is Florentine and of the School of the Gaddi. Then there are examples of the Venetian School, with paintings by Andrea Previtali and Marco Basaiti, the one a figure of "The Risen Christ" and the other a "Portrait of a Man" with the Cadore Hills as a background. The Umbrian School also finds representation through a "Madonna and Child" attributed to Pintoricchio. German art, too, is represented in the collection, at least the art of that part of the Rhenish provinces in which



TUNG-FANG-SU WITH THE PEACH

By Sin-Zen

Gift of M. B. Metcalf, 1921

Teutonic and Flemish influences strove for the mastery. The example of this is a "Descent from the Cross" of the Cologne School. A painting which has been long in the gallery and which has been most popular is "The Children's Quarrel" by G. Jakobides. Lastly, there is an unusual example of the English School of which the Museum can be proud. It is "The Village Fair" by George Morland. With it came a contemporary colored print of the painting, by William Ward.

Chinese painting also attracted Mr. Metcalf, and through his gifts the group of kakemonos and makimonos grew rapidly. In this field he gave fifteen examples. The two by Chao Ta-Nien and Mi Yuan-Hwei are discussed at length in this Bulletin.

Then there are "Tung Fang Su with the peach of immortality" by Sin-Zen, which is illustrated here; examples by Yen Tzu Ping, Ma Yüan, Liu Sung-Nien, Kuan T'ung, Kuan Hsiu, Hai Ko, Chang Hsüan and Chou Tang; and landscapes attributed to Li Chao Tao and Wang Wei. These, added to those otherwise acquired by gift or purchase, place the Chinese collection in the Museum in an enviable position.

Mr. Metcalf's interest in sculpture began with the purchase of a wooden statuette of the "Madonna and Child" of the Cologne School, which came from the village of Freschen. He also appreciated Chinese sculpture, with the result that a number of fine examples of the T'ang and Sung periods were added to the Museum. All have their particular interest, but mention may be made of such notable examples as the votive stelae of Chang Tsai Kai and Chang T'an-pao, the fine and rare yellow jade stela of Chao Pao Lo of 536 A. D., and the remarkable ivory statuette of Han-Yu of the Sung Dynasty.

The Museum also received forty examples of Graeco-Syrian glass and eleven pieces of Rakka pottery. In both groups is found the beauty of iridescence which comes from long burial, and which is the delight of many collectors. At the same time both have their interest of form and technique. Last, and not least, is a beautiful pair of lacquered book-covers of Persian origin, of the Bokhara School and the time of Shah Abbas.

The value of the collection to the community at large, and of such careful collectors as Mr. Metcalf, is pointed out in a recent editorial in the Lowell Courier-Citizen which reads:—"Objects of art given to the museum of the Rhode Island School of Design by the late Manton B. Metcalf have been placed on exhibition at Providence. They constitute an object lesson in public spirit. Beginning nearly 30 years ago, a member of one of Rhode Island's wealthiest families began collecting art, not for himself, but for the city in which he lived. He had rare good taste as well as means of gratification. He was one of those who

early recognized the beauty and dignity of the older arts of China. He collected in many other fields, always with marked acumen and discrimination. As a consequence, the Rhode Island School of Design, one of the major institutions of its sort in New England, is now valuably enriched. If someone of like wealth, taste and vision would collect textiles or paintings or sculpture for Lowell, what a boon to posterity!"

L. E. R.

THE COLLECTOR

IT has been aptly said that all mankind may be divided into two races—those who accumulate, and those who collect. (Ronald Clowes). The one includes those who follow blindly the instinct to gather objects aimlessly, and the other those who bring together material with order and purpose. The division is of course an arbitrary one, but it defines the two extremes. It should be noted that there are many kinds of collectors, some approaching one extreme more than the other. With the accumulation of objects we are not at the moment concerned, although there are many in every community who come into this class, but the true collector at the other end of the scale is indeed worthy of consideration. He it is who seeks in his collection to illustrate some chapter of the great world of nature, or some phase of art or history.

This class of collector may be divided into four groups. There is the miser who brings together his collection with system, but hides it for his own enjoyment. He makes no provision for the disposition of his collection at his death, and his relatives divide or dispose of it at will, often without appreciation of the merits of the objects it contains. This is a dangerous type, for many treasures are thus lost or destroyed.

The second group includes those who acquire a collection purely as a business investment, who look forward to a return of their money and a profit in proportion to their shrewdness as collectors. These people miss much of the joy which comes to the last two groups, for in general they care

nothing about the ultimate destination of their treasures.

The third group is a very laudable one. In it are the collectors who have acquired their treasures through appreciation of their inherent merit, who have enjoyed the chase and the ultimate possession and who are willing to pass on some of this pleasure to others. A good example of this type was Edmond de Goncourt, who in his will said, "My wish is that my Drawings, my Prints, my Curiosities, my Books — in a word these things of art which have been the joy of my life — shall not be consigned to the cold tomb of a museum, and subjected to the stupid glance of the careless passer-by; but I require that they shall all be dispersed under the hammer of the Auctioneer, so that the pleasure which the acquiring of each one of them has given me shall be given again, in each case, to some inheritor of my own tastes." Such collectors furnish the material that passes through our auction rooms and makes it possible for them to live. It should be noted that the museum of to-day, if it justifies its existence at all, is totally different from what it was in de Goncourt's time, for it is wholly alive to the needs of the day, and long since ceased to be a "cold storage warehouse of works of art."

The fourth and most important group is made up of those who have acquired their treasures with wisdom, always striving to improve their standards. They are people of wide vision, who do not like to have all their efforts brought to naught in the auction room. They realize that by giving their collections to a museum, and making the gift without condition, the importance of the gift will be properly emphasized. But above all, they have the desire to bring joy to the thousands who yearly visit the museum, and to make accessible beautiful and costly objects which would otherwise be beyond the reach of the public. It is chiefly through this unselfish and broad-minded action that the American museums have been able to accomplish so much. To this last group belonged Mr. Manton Bradley Metcalf, who by his frequent and well-selected gifts has built up in the Museum of

the Rhode Island School of Design a collection of which the institution and the public may well be proud.

A PAINTING OF THE ANTWERP SCHOOL

THE history of art in the Low Countries in the sixteenth century presents many fascinating problems to the student. Not only is there an opportunity to study the life of the times with its delight in costumes, rich fabrics, jewelry, etc., but there are many elusive personalities among the artists whose characteristics and technique are not easy to differentiate. This is very true of the school of painting at Antwerp where, for purely arbitrary reasons, there is a group of paintings listed under the name of Henri or Herri Met de Bles. That such a man existed is well established. He was born at Bouvignes, near Dinant, about 1485. Like many of his fellow artists, he travelled elsewhere in Europe. In France he was known as "Henri à la Houppie," and in Italy he was called "Civetta." Some critics feel that he was a relative of Joachim Patenir and perhaps that he was the Henri de Patenir who was recognized as a master in the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp in 1535. It is known that he probably worked at Malines in 1521, and died about the year 1550. His portrait was engraved by Wierix.

Attributions, however, are open to question, and everything listed under his name did not necessarily come from his brush; much of the group belongs under the general heading "Antwerp Mannerist." For this reason it will be desirable to consider whether the painting is a good example of the period and expresses its characteristics. This is the case with a painting in the M. B. Metcalf Collection, which has been attributed to Henri Met de Bles. The subject is the "Adoration of the Magi," one frequently used in the Netherlandish art of the sixteenth century. In the centre, seated on the foot of a couch or bed, is Mary and the Child Jesus. To the left is Balthasar, the Ethiopian king, about



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI attributed to Henri Met de Bles
Flemish, 16th Cen.
Gift of Manton B. Metcalf, 1921

to remove his turban as he approaches. At the feet of the central group kneels the oldest king, Caspar, who has removed the cover of the vase which he holds in his hand in order that the Christ Child may reach inside. His red hat occupies a prominent place on the floor in front of Mary. Behind him is the younger, bearded king, Melchior, with pointed hat, awaiting his turn to present his gifts. Against the base of a column behind Mary leans Joseph, idly stirring food for the Christ Child in a dish which resembles the porringer of later date. There is an architectural setting in the rear. Through the window and between the col-

umns one sees a characteristic Flemish landscape such as graces so many of the paintings of that period.

In color, the painting is rich and fine. The red covering of the bed, the blue cloak of the Madonna, the blue dress, dark olive-green cloak and blood-red hose of the Ethiopian, the deep red cloak and purple-grey robe of the oldest of the Magi, and the blue robe trimmed with fur and the red hat of the third of the kings, all combine to produce a beautiful decorative effect.

The painting may be classed in Group A in the tentative assignment made by Adolf Friedlander in his study of the Antwerp

School (Berichte aus den Preussischen Kunstsammlungen, 1915, pp. 65-91.)

The common features of the group are the emphasis on architecture, the curious headgear, the high forehead of the Madonna, and the rather artificial posing of the persons. The influence of the previous artists of greater importance such as Gerard David, is seen in the drawing of the Christ Child and the rather peculiar elaborate folds of the drapery.

All of this does not help us much to appreciate the charm of the painting. To understand the spirit in it we need to remember the commercial supremacy of Antwerp in the sixteenth century. The importance of Bruges had waned both in commerce and art. Antwerp was in its prime. Her citizens enjoyed remarkable wealth, her social life was gay and festive, and there was a great demand for objects of art. This impulse was felt in all lines. The demand for paintings encouraged many artists. Proof of this is seen in the records of the Guild of St. Luke. But the high standards to which the Van Eycks, Gerard David and others had held were no longer adhered to. Art was commercialized to some degree to meet the larger demand. The result is that the group of artists are for convenience called "Antwerp Mannerists," which further study may define in some detail.

The above may suggest that the painting is not a worthy object. This is not the case. While admittedly it lacks the genius of the greater men, its beauty of color, rich decorative effect and religious feeling are qualities which make it highly attractive. It is well for us to get in touch with a period in which art played so extensive a part and added so much to life, and we are therefore grateful to Mr. Metcalf for including this fine example of the Antwerp School in his gift.

TWO CHINESE PAINTINGS

EMPHASIS on landscape painting by itself and not as accessory to the human figure is comparatively modern in Europe; for this we are indebted to the Dutch artists of the seventeenth century.

Furthermore those who have yielded to its charm have been realistic more than imaginary, particular rather than general. Only in our own generation have the French Impressionists presented other phases of landscape painting. The contrast is marked between the European treatment of landscape and the Chinese, especially that of the great T'ang (618-906 A. D.) and Sung (960-1277) Dynasties. The Chinese method of approach is not through particular representation, but by abstract composition based on memory and an attempt to paint the soul of the scene which the artist has in mind. One recalls the story of Wang Li who after painting Hua Mountain for years,* threw all his previous studies aside and painted the soul of the mountain. It should be noticed that this genius of the Chinese in its flower antedated European attempts by several centuries and achieved a success and power which causes us to marvel as we study it more and more.

The Chinese divided their paintings into definite classes among which that of landscape, mountains and water was called "Shan Shin." Two superb examples of this special type in the Sung period are among the gifts of Mr. M. B. Metcalf to the Museum. They are "Winter" by Chao Ta Nien and "Mountain Mists" by Mi Yuan Hwei. It is impossible to show them in reproduction, for their subtleties of value, and the tone given to them by age, defy the camera. The originals deserve extended study, although this notice of them must of necessity be brief. Both are of the form called by the Chinese Hêng P'i and by the Japanese "Makimono," namely a long roll or scroll which is held in the hand. As such they should be slowly unrolled so that the ever-increasing charm of the scene gradually unfolds, to the delight of the connoisseur.

The study of "Winter" by Chao Ta Nien shows first, as one begins on the right, a frozen marsh, then the swampy shore with the leafless trees, next the slopes of snow clad hills, sparsely covered with naked trees, the only foliage that of a few bushes. Flocks of birds circle overhead. Over the whole are the murky clouds and the frosty mist

which chills to the marrow. Does not the spirit of winter live in such a scene?

This example, like many Sung paintings, is made on silk. In the Sung Dynasty there were several kinds which were especially used by the painters, and were much finer woven than that of the T'ang Dynasty. The brushstroke is the feature in any painting which interests the Chinese. It is here most masterly and fine. The certainty of the drawing, the treatment of the values and the mastery of black and white, all give evidence of Chao Ta-Nien's skill as a painter.

The second painting, "Mountain Mists," by Mi Yuan-Hwei is also in black and white but on paper. It is not a study in line but in wash. The painter has given us the hour of early morning when the mists are rising and revealing the charm of nature. The winding river in the foreground, the wooded banks in the middle distance and the rounded peaks on the horizon, their bases still blanketed in white, unfold before us as the scroll gradually opens. Here is true impressionism, that which the French have long sought for, with but moderate success. Here, too, is a repetition of theme with increasing accent rising to a crescendo which makes one feel a parallel between it and music, and all the more so because the theme dies down slightly to end in a harmony which echoes its most impressive moment.

Mi Yuan-Hwei specialized in morning mists following in the footsteps of his father Mi Fei, who said that his art might be expressed in eight Chinese characters, meaning, "When it has rained during the night and ceased at daybreak, depict the morning mists before they separate." It is interesting to note that there are forty-one seals upon the makimono and its mount which give evidence that it has passed through famous collections. It should be stated, however, that there is nothing more dangerous to trust in a Chinese painting than seals, as they can be and are forged to an amazing degree; even the old ink is imitated to perfection. The seals on this painting apparently may be trusted. The

makimono also bears nine appreciative poems by well-known poets of the Sung, Yuan and Ming Dynasties.

Neither Chao Ta-Nien nor Mi-Yuan Hwei are easy to determine as persons aside from their work. The former was also called Chao-Ling Yang, and was an elder cousin of the Emperor Hui-Tsung. He it was who, with the Emperor, started the famous Academy of Painting in China.

Mi Yuan-Hwei, as already stated, was the son of Mi Fei. His real name was Mi-Yin-rên, the Yuan-hwei being a courtesy title. He was a native of Siang-Yang in Hupeh Province. He rose to distinction both in his art and in official court circles, for he became Vice President of the Board of War and Grand Secretary in one of the Imperial Halls of the Court; an interesting sidelight on the part that artists have played in Chinese politics from time to time. He died in 1149 A. D. The artist's technique is worthy of notice for, in sharp contrast to his father, he used thin ink and a light brush stroke, getting his effects by many light splashes of ink.

L.E.R.

*"Chinese Philosophy of Art" by Arthur Waley, The Burlington, Vol. 39, (No. 231, Aug. 1921, p. 89.)

A PORTRAIT BY CORNELIS DE VOS

AMONG the paintings given by Mr. M. B. Metcalf is a full-length portrait of a young princess which is attributed to Cornelis de Vos. The portrait is a charming one and an excellent example of the Flemish work of the early 17th century. The young girl has her right hand on the arm of a chair. The ostrich feather fan which she holds in her left hand is particularly interesting as showing the same fan used in the 17th century which is so popular to-day. She is dressed in a dark green dress and red damask petticoat. Her collar and cuffs are trimmed with a fine bobbin lace. Her banded sleeves and jewelry add much to the interest of the painting. The face and hands are treated in the masterly fashion so characteristic of Van Dyck and his fellow artists.

The artist to whom the portrait is attributed was a painter of distinction. Cor-

nelis de Vos was born in Hulst in 1585, and died in Antwerp on May 9, 1651. He was a pupil of David Remeus; a brother-in-law of the animal painter, Franz Snyders, and a personal friend of Van Dyck. So able was he that Rubens is said to have sent many of his patrons to him, saying, "Go to Cornelis de Vos; he is my second self." This story may or may not be true, but it is at least indicative of his high position among his fellows. De Vos was a versatile artist, making portraits and the large canvases, so popular in his day, which deal with historical or religious subjects, with the personages dressed in contemporary fashion. His standing in his craft may be seen from his having been dean of the Guild of St. Luke in 1619-20. His work closely resembled that of Van Dyck, with which it is sometimes confused.

Pedigrees of paintings have their value not because they reveal to us the message the artist sought to give through his work, but because they show how long a work has been known, and to some degree tell us how much it has been appreciated. So it may be worth while to note that the "Portrait of a Young Princess" appeared first in the collection of the King of Holland, then in the Brett and Dorington Collections in England. In these it was attributed to Van Dyck himself. It was shown in the Exhibition of Art Treasures in London in 1857. Its history from its last appearance in Christie's in London in the '80's until it was acquired by Mr. Metcalf is not known.

Painting of the Low Countries shows little differentiation until the end of the 16th century, when the Dutch and Flemish characteristics become more evident. By de Vos' time Flemish art had reached its period of greatest brilliancy, encouraged by the riches of the burghers and the orders of the visiting Spanish grandees and their families. The most successful work was in the field of portraiture. Henri Fuselli in his lectures on paintings says, "Resemblance, character, costume are the three requisites of portrait painting; resemblance distinguishes, character classifies, and costume assigns place and time to an individual."

Certainly, these three were present in Flemish art at its best period, to which de Vos belonged. Equally true is it that in all three elements, the artist has been very successful in the "Portrait of a Young Princess," although in the course of years her identity has been lost.

A brief notice of Cornelis de Vos is printed in Harper's Magazine for January 1924. This article was written before it appeared.

ARTICLES ON OBJECTS IN THE METCALF GIFT IN THE BULLETIN OF THE RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Graeco-Syrian Glass, October, 1915, vol. III, no. 4, pp. 5-6.

"Portrait of a Venetian," by Marco Basaiti, April, 1918, vol. VI, no. 2, pp. 9-10.

"The Risen Christ," by Andrea Previtali, April, 1918, vol. VI, no. 2, pp. 10-11.

"Madonna and Child," School of Pintoricchio, April, 1918, vol. VI, no. 2, pp. 10-12.

"Hagar and Ishmael," by Francisco Colanthes, October, 1918, vol. VI, no. 4, pp. 30-32.

Votive stele of Chao Pao Lo, April, 1919, vol. VII, no. 2, pp. 18-20.

An Italian Birth Salver, July, 1922, vol. X, no. 3, pp. 24-26.

Votive stele of Chang Tsai Kai, January, 1923, vol. XI, no. 1, pp. 7-8.

Statue of Bodhisattva, October, 1923, vol. XI, no. 4, pp. 42-44.

THE CATALOGUE

A catalogue of the works of art given by Mr. Manton B. Metcalf and shown in the Memorial Exhibition has been prepared and is on sale at the price of twenty-five cents a copy. As it is illustrated and contains detailed information, it will be of permanent value to museums, libraries, and friends of art in general and of the Museum in particular. The edition is limited and orders will be filled for the remaining copies, post free.